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SIX MOVIES UNWRAPPING ON CHRISTMAS

METRO OFFERS A NICE LIST OF NON-TURKEYS TO GO SEE ON DEC. 25 PAGE 19



Merriment but no Metro

Sorry, we're taking a break for the holidays. We're back on Dec. 26 with special issue looking ahead to 2015!





MAKE MOMENTS TO REMEMBER

Greg Yung and his daughter Sydney, 5, pose while grandfather Sam Yung snaps photos at the Alberta Legislature grounds on Tuesday. The weather was mild as families and couples enjoyed the Christmas display and skating. We here at Metro hope you enjoy a safe and happy holiday season, Edmonton, and we'll see you again in 2015. STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

Smart Bus coming to final routes

Final five. City needs funding to get the tech on any more routes



STEPHANIE DUBOIS
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The city's last five bus routes to get real-time tracking technology will roll out at the end of February while city officials wait on provincial funding and potentially city council advice.

Bus routes 12, 36, 123, 152 and 154 will join the 304 city buses that already have the technology deployed, allowing customers to track when their bus will arrive at a specific stop or other location.

"The customers that have real-time information for their routes really love it," said Lorna Stewart, director of customer experience and innovation with the city.

City council decided to fund Smart Bus technology during recent budget discussions. Administration advised it would be cheaper over time to get the Smart Bus technology and Smart Fare equipment installed together.

Since the city is awaiting dollars from the province under the Green Transit Incentives Program (GreenTRIP) for Smart Fare, that in turn puts Smart Bus tech on hold.

"We're hopeful we can still move ahead with Smart Bus and get it in place," said Stewart.

If the money doesn't materialize, city administration will have to return to council for direction, which could further delay the technology.

The province's transportation-department officials say they have received the GreenTRIP application from regional partners, but it's too early to tell if the city will receive the funding.



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Vader. Bail granted for suspect in murder of seniors

A lawyer for a suspect in a case involving two Alberta seniors who vanished four years ago is planning to challenge the reactivation of old murder charges.

Travis Vader, 42, was re-arrested last week on two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Lyle and Marie McCann. The couple, both in their 70s, were last seen fuelling up their motorhome in their hometown of St. Albert in July 2010.

The charges were stayed in March, a few weeks before Vader was to have a jury trial. He was released from custody in October after being found not guilty of unrelated drug and weapons offences.

Vader was to be freed again Tuesday, after a judge granted him $25,000 bail on the condition that he remain under house arrest.

Defence lawyer Brian Beresh told reporters after the bail hearing that he will be mounting a court challenge. He said it's rare for the Crown to reactivate murder charges and officials have provided no explanation.

"There has to be some exceptional circumstance," Beresh said. "I have no new information about any new evidence whatsoever."

Crown prosecutor Ashley Finlayson said outside court that he's not sure if the reactivation can be challenged.

He said that the Crown's office originally stayed the murder charges because there was a "disclosure issue" and the case needed to be reviewed. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Uber, the app shown in the phone on this photo, is already established in several other Canadian cities such as Toronto and Montreal. METRO FILE

Taxi drivers notice slow weekend as Uber launches

'Right now, nothing is happening.' United Cab Drivers Association is pursuing ways to stop ride-share company



STEPHANIE DUBOIS
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Cab drivers in the city say they aren't sure if it's the falling oil prices or people leaving for vacation that made this past weekend a slow one in the city, but they fear the launch of Uber may have been the true cause.

Balraj Manhas, president of the United Cab Drivers Association of Edmonton, said the first weekend of Uber could be proof that there's a greater need for city officials to take action on enforcement.

"Right now, nothing is happening. They're taking our business and the industry is very slow right now, especially during these Christmas days when it's supposed to be busy," he said.

The association is pursuing a stop order from city council to allegedly make sure Uber doesn't take any potential clients from licensed cab drivers, but is awaiting the end of the holiday season to do so.

"We don't even know if Uber is still going to give free rides while council is away … and we have to look at these things as an industry and take some action," he said.

Uber representatives didn't provide any information on the number of Edmontonians who used the service the first weekend in Edmonton, but said they saw support for their service across the city.

"Every time we launch in a new city, the word of mouth has grown … So when we launch in a new market, we see an appetite for the product grow very, very quickly," said Xavier Van Chau, communications lead with Uber Canada.

Across Canada

Other Canadian cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Quebec City already have Uber.



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Official Opposition. Wildrose keeps its status

Alberta's Wildrose party is still the Official Opposition.

Speaker Gene Zwozdesky sent a letter to both the Wildrose and Liberal parties Tuesday confirming his decision.

Zwozdesky said incumbency was the key to his ruling.

"The long and short of this decision is I reviewed all the authorities I could possibly review, as well as all the precedents I could possibly review in similar circumstances," Zwozdesky said later in a phone interview.

"I concluded the overwhelming evidence favoured holding on to the incumbent, because the incumbency factor is really the key thing here when a tie exists."

A defection last week by former Wildrose leader Danielle Smith and eight other caucus members had left both the Wildrose and Liberals with five seats each.

The Wildrose named Heather Forsyth interim leader Monday and immediately contacted Zwozdesky about the appointment.



Wildrose interim leader Heather Forsyth. METRO FILE PHOTO

"What they said was there was a party with a leader that was the Official Opposition. And without having a leader, it might have been a different question," said Zwozdesky.

"They were quick to choose a leader all on their own and apprised me of that. It was taken into consideration."

Official Opposition status gives a party more money and the right to ask more questions in the legislature.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fugitives. EPS chips in on Canada-wide arrests

Special Edmonton Police units have helped in a national operation that resulted in arrests of more than 130 fugitives during a one-month period.

The fugitives have a combined total of 1,240 outstanding warrants for varying offences like aggravated assault and robbery.

Tusif Ur Rehman Chhina, 30, of Pakistan, wanted on 27 outstanding warrants, robbery, forgery and fraud-related charges in Edmonton, Calgary and Germany was just one example provided by police of the arrest.

Tisif will remain in custody in Calgary, where he is facing 17 warrants for offences ranging from kidnapping, unlawful confinement, uttering threats, extortion, fraud, possessing fraudulent identification and assault. The accused will then face a deportation hearing, which will be undertaken by the CBSA.

The arrests were part of the Project Operation Warrant Execution (OWE), a collaborative effort between EPS and other agencies.

METRO


About 20 players each from EPS and kids from McCauley, plus supporters from EPS, the U of A cheer team and the community, gather for the annual winter afternoon hockey match, which builds positive relationship in city neighbourhoods. LUCY HAINES/FOR METRO

Annual hockey match bonds police with kids

Community-builder. Edmonton Police Service officers lace up the skates and man the barbecues at McCauley rink

LUCY HAINES
edmonton@metronews.ca

A Tuesday afternoon pick-up game of hockey at McCauley Community Rink wasn't just a match between police and area kids — it was relationship-building.

"Last year it was minus-30, but just as many of our members came out to engage with the kids," said this year's McCauley Cup organizer, Const. Terrance Jakubowski, who hung up his skates this year to handle the barbecue and cheer the teams on from the sidelines.

"This game helps improve relationships," Jakubowski said. "The kids see that without our uniform, we're just people, too."

EPS participates in similar ways throughout the year at various city schools, getting to know students in a different way via floor hockey or volleyball games. But for Albert Bernard, who has lived in McCauley for nearly 30 years and brings sons Albert Jr., 15, and Eric, 11, to play in the Cup every year, this event is special.

Annual kids, cops game

6

The McCauley Cup started six years ago with a downtown beat police officer, who wanted to bridge the gap between police and citizens. Kids in the core-area neighbourhood have free use of skates, helmets and sticks for the annual game.

"Community is everything — this makes us all one. Sometimes a poorer neighbourhood only sees one side of police, but I've seen a lot of positive changes over the years, and this event is great for the kids," he said.

With the help of McCauley Community League, Sports Central, United Cycle, Edmonton Oilers and others, the day includes a hot dog barbecue, sandwiches and a bonfire with free hot chocolate, but that's not what 11 year-old McCauley resident Jaden Cyprien likes best.

"I want to see the police play, and maybe score a goal against them," Cyprien said. "It's different from the shinny we play every other day."

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Head trauma cause of victim's death

Police are still looking for information related to the death of a young man in southwest Edmonton on Saturday.

An autopsy was done Monday and the death was deemed a homicide, with the cause of death listed as head trauma.

The victim, Raad Hamza, 24, is believed to have been talking to two individuals before the assault.

Police have reason to believe there were as many as six witnesses who might have seen what led to the attack, along with the assault itself, which happened quite quickly and possibly lasted only 10 seconds. Police have reason to believe Hamza and the two suspects likely knew each other to some extent.

This is the 27th homicide of 2014, and police still seek help from the public.

Anyone with information that may assist investigators is asked to contact the EPS at 780-423-4567 or #377 from a mobile phone. Anonymous information can also be submitted to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

METRO, WITH FILES FROM LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO


EPS homicide division's Det. Dale Johnson. LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO

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Looking for suspect

Masseur alleged to have sexually assaulted client

The Edmonton Police Service is asking the public for assistance in identifying a suspect in an alleged sexual assault that occurred in downtown Edmonton earlier this month.

Police are on the lookout for a suspect involved in an alleged sexual assault at Stillpoint Wellness Centre and Chi Spa, located at 112 Street and Jasper Avenue, on Dec. 5.

It's alleged that a masseur sexually assaulted a female client who went to him for a massage.

The woman then reported it to police shortly after. Individuals can call police from a mobile phone at #377.

METRO

RCMP and police

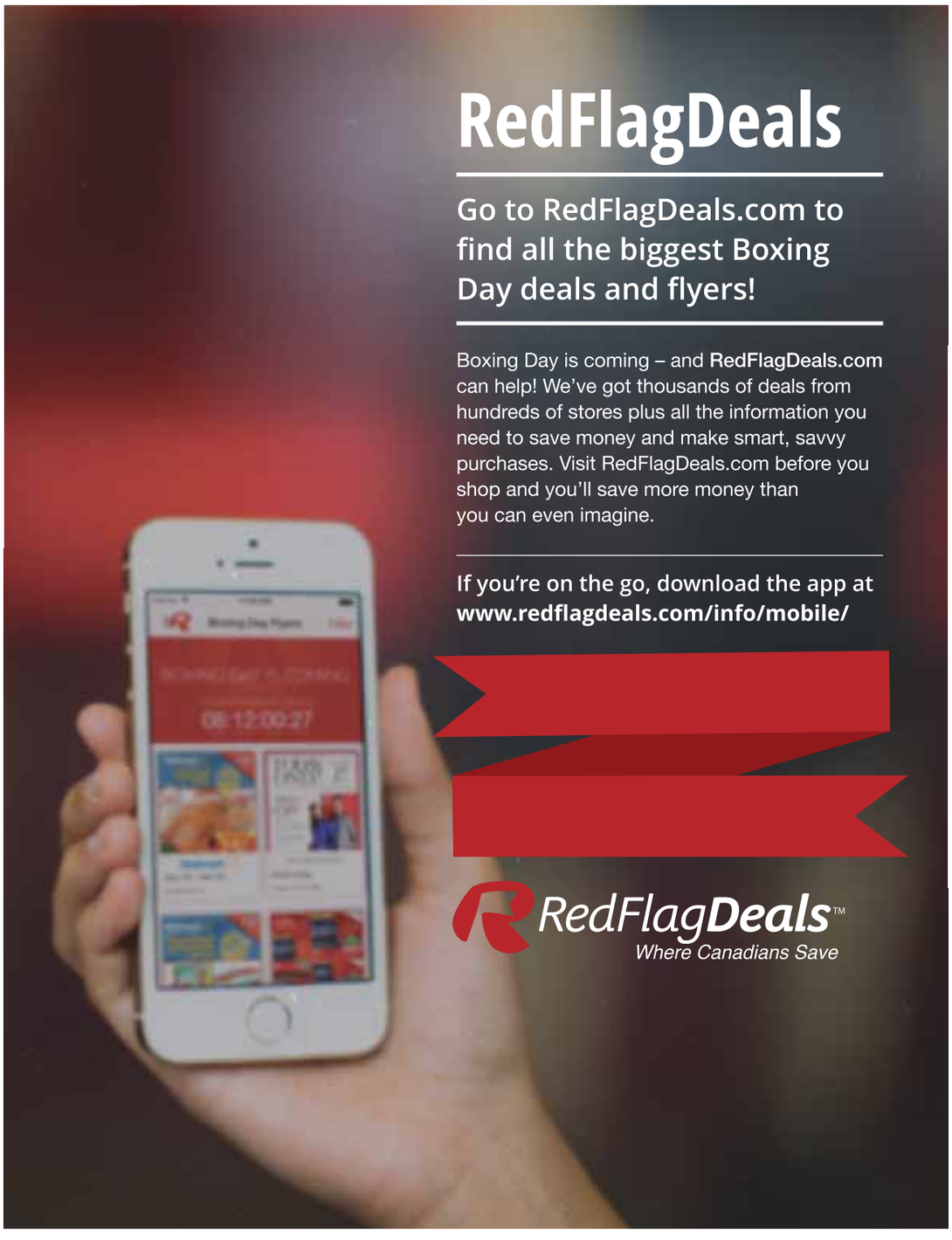
Couple tied to 'dial-a-dope' case charged

An Edmonton couple has been charged in connection to a "dial-a-dope" drug trafficking operation.

On Dec. 19, the Spruce Grove/Stony Plain RCMP Drug Unit, with help from Edmonton Police, seized over 60 grams of cocaine, approximately $10,000 in cash and a number of items used in the sale of illegal drugs during a search.

Police say the drug operation served west Edmonton, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Enoch Cree Nation areas.

Ashton McIlroy, 24, and Alexandra Neddow, 20, have been charged and will appear in court on Jan. 19. METRO





Student Jonathan Bilodeau stands in front of his school after hearing about the government's decision to approve market-modifier tuition hikes. As a result, he is reconsidering his options. STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

Tuition hikes hitting home

Cost concerns. After the province approved market-modifier proposals for 10 schools, a student is re-evaluating his options

Currently a student at Edmonton's NAIT, Jonathan Bilodeau had his eyes on pursuing a graduate degree in business administration — topping his list of prospective schools were the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta.

But the programs offered by both institutions were among 25 approved for market-modifier tuition hikes Monday in a move that will see eight per cent of students province-wide collectively fork over an additional $21 million annually.

"It throws off the kind of options you can pursue and, really, just forces me to look outside the province instead of staying at home where I was born and raised," explained Bilodeau.

The U of A's business administration program will see costs skyrocket by 42 per cent to more than $34,700, while the U of C's will jump 18 per cent to nearly $38,500.

The province has maintained its market-modification program aims to correct anomalies where institutions in the province are charging less for an educational offering than peer schools elsewhere. The steepest percentage increases were seen at Olds College, where tuition will jump 71 per cent in three programs.

Lisa Collins, provost and University of Alberta registrar, says discussions with students led universities like Edmonton's to allot some dollars towards financial aid.

"All five faculties involved with market modifiers (at the University of Alberta) have committed at least 20 per cent of their new source of funding to merit-based funding opportunities for students," she said.

Bilodeau, meanwhile, said the hikes are "just another slap in the face for post-secondary students" who've been critical of the provincial funding supplied to their ministry for years.

"We need an ever-increasing amount of education just to get jobs that 40 or 50 years ago people didn't even need a degree to get," he said. "That's why we spend tens of thousands on bachelor and masters degrees … it's very frustrating." STEPHANIE DUBOIS AND JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Jump

42%

The U of A's MBA program will see a 42 per cent jump in tuition costs due to the approval of the market modifier.



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Magnotta guilty of murder, jury finds

Life imprisonment. Luka Rocco Magnotta also convicted of four other non-murder charges

Luka Rocco Magnotta remained impassive as one of the 12 jurors who deliberated his fate uttered the word "guilty" to all five charges against him in the slaying and dismemberment of Jun Lin, including first-degree murder.

Magnotta was later sentenced to life imprisonment on the murder charge, with no chance of applying for parole for 25 years.

On the four non-murder charges, the native of Scarborough, Ont., was given the maximum terms allowed under the Criminal Code, ranging from two to 10 years. The sentences are concurrent.

His lawyer, Luc Leclair, told reporters his client was "disappointed" but "relieved."

Impact statement

"I had come to learn what happened to my son that night and I leave without a true or a complete answer. I had come to see remorse, to hear some form of apology, and I leave without anything."

Daniel Urbas reading an impact statement from Diran Lin, father of Jun Lin

Crown prosecutor Louis Bouthillier said he was fully expecting the jury to deliver the five guilty verdicts.

After the verdicts, a lawyer read out an impact statement on behalf of Lin's father, Diran Lin, who watched proceedings throughout the trial from a private room in the courthouse.

"I had come to see your trial system to see justice done and I leave satisfied that you have not let my son down," Daniel Urbas told the emotionally charged room.

The other charges Magnotta was convicted of were criminally harassing Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other members of Parliament; mailing obscene and indecent material; committing an indignity to a body; and publishing obscene materials.

Magnotta was seeking to be found not criminally responsible in the May 2012 slaying by way of mental disorder, with experts testifying he was in a psychotic state the night of the killing and couldn't tell right from wrong.

The Crown countered the crime was both planned and deliberate and that Magnotta's behaviour and actions went against someone supposedly suffering from a disease of the mind.

As Magnotta had admitted to the physical acts, the jury's task was to determine his state of mind at the time.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Marking a century since Christmas truce

The Parliament Buildings in Ottawa are shown with Christmas lights on Monday. Dr. Andrea McCrady, who is the Dominion Carillonneur, will be among 11 countries' carillonneurs playing Silent Night on Dec. 24 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Christmas truce during the First World War. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Sask. Mountie facing charges of child porn

A Mountie posted in a remote fly-in community in northern Saskatchewan has been charged with accessing and possessing child pornography.

RCMP said they began investigating the officer stationed in Fond-du-Lac in September.

Staff Sgt. Ron Weir with the province's Internet Exploitation Unit said officers had been conducting an internal police investigation into file sharing and were tracing IP addresses when they identified the fellow Mountie as a suspect.

"It's very disturbing when any member of a law enforcement agency in Canada or around the world is into this type of material," Weir said.

Quoted

"It was quite disappointing and disturbing as police officers that we would have to investigate one of our own."

RCMP Staff Sgt. Ron Weir

Const. Aiden Arthur Pratchett, 31, joined the force in 2010 and served in the town of Porcupine Plain before he was transferred to Fond-du-Lac.

Personal computer devices were seized from his home in the northern community in October.

He was arrested and charged Monday and released from custody on the conditions that he have no Internet access, not possess data storage devices and stay away from children. He is to appear in Prince Albert provincial court on Jan. 28.

Supt. Alfredo Bangloy said a code of conduct investigation is continuing and the officer could receive further work penalties now that he faces criminal charges.

Weir added that the criminal investigation is also continuing and further charges could be laid. THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. Supreme Court

Sex assault lawsuit against ex-Olympic CEO dropped

A woman has dropped a lawsuit that alleged former Olympic CEO John Furlong sexually abused her while he was a teacher in Burns Lake, B.C.

Beverly Abraham says she feels like a weight has been lifted off her shoulders.

Her suit against Furlong was dismissed in B.C. Supreme Court on Friday with no costs to either party, after she asked the court to allow her to withdraw the legal action. Abraham said three of her family members have died recently, and she couldn't handle the stress of the lawsuit on top of her grief.

She says she decided that discontinuing her lawsuit was the best option for her to move on with her life after consulting with hereditary chiefs from her First Nation.

A statement from Furlong's legal counsel said he has always maintained the allegations from Abraham and two other accusers are false, and an RCMP investigation has also concluded Abraham's allegations are not supported. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Volatile east

151 Taliban dead in 12-day fight: Afghan official

At least 151 Taliban fighters have been killed by government forces during 12 days of fighting in the volatile east, near the border with Pakistan, the police chief of Kunar province said Tuesday.

Gen. Abdul Habib Sayedkhaili said at least another 100 insurgents were wounded in the fighting in Dangam district.

He said the Pakistani Taliban and Lashkar-i-Taiba — the group responsible for the attacks on Mumbai in 2008 in which more than 160 people were killed — were also taking part in the battle. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ahead of elections

Israel pumps millions into West Bank settlements

Israel's outgoing government is pumping millions of dollars into Jewish settlements in the West Bank for public buildings and roads ahead of national elections, an official said Tuesday, in what opponents view as a political ploy aimed at gaining favour with hardline voters.

The official said the spending spree had been held up by former Finance Minister Yair Lapid of the centrist Yesh Atid party, who was fired early this month in a move that helped trigger the early election. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brain-dead, pregnant

Doctors say woman should be taken off life support

Irish doctors who have been keeping a brain-dead pregnant woman on life support in hope of saving her 17-week-old fetus pleaded in court Tuesday to be permitted to turn off the machines because their treatment was becoming horrific and could not end in a successful birth.

Dublin High Court heard harrowing testimony from seven doctors, the woman's partner and father in a case that has reignited debate over the inadequacy of abortion law in Ireland, a predominantly Catholic country with a constitution that gives the fetus an equal right to life. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. might lift ban on gay blood donors

31-year-old policy. FDA favours new policy barring donations from men who have had gay sex in the previous year

U.S. health officials are recommending an end to America's lifetime ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men, a 31-year-old policy that many medical groups and gay activists say is no longer justified.

The Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday it favours replacing the blanket ban with a new policy barring donations from men who have had gay sex in the previous year. FDA officials said that policy is supported by research and would put the U.S. in line with other countries including Australia, Japan and Britain.

The lifetime ban dates from the early years of the AIDS crisis and was intended to protect the blood supply from what was a then little-understood disease. But many medical groups, including the American Medical Association, say the policy is no longer supported by science, given advances in HIV testing. Gay activists say the lifetime ban is discriminatory and perpetuates negative stereotypes of homosexual men.

The agency will recommend the switch in draft guidelines early next year and move to finalize them after taking comments from the public, FDA officials. FDA Deputy Director Dr. Peter Parks declined to give a time frame for completing the process but said, "we commit to working as quickly as possible on this issue."

All blood donations are screened for HIV; however, the test only detects the virus after it's been in the bloodstream about 10 days. That allows a brief window when the virus that causes AIDS can go undetected. According to government figures, men who have had sex with other men represent about two per cent of the U.S. population, yet account for at least 62 per cent of all new HIV infections in the U.S. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sony announces limited theatrical release of The Interview

A large poster advertising the movie The Interview hangs on the back wall of the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Tuesday in Houston. Sony Pictures Entertainment announced Tuesday a limited theatrical release of The Interview beginning Thursday, putting back into the theatres the comedy that prompted an international incident with North Korea and outrage over its cancelled release. PAT SULLIVAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sri Lanka. Floods, mudslides kill 3, displace thousands

Three people died and more than 60,000 had to be evacuated to safer locations due to floods and mudslides caused by heavy rains around Sri Lanka, officials said Tuesday.

The Disaster Management Center said that three days of heavy rain in 15 districts also injured two persons and destroyed about 1,900 homes.

Hospitals and government offices were inundated and some inmates of a prison were transferred to other facilities.

It is monsoon season in some parts of Sri Lanka, but many other areas not normally affected are also experiencing non-seasonal rain. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milwaukee. Officer not charged, family looks to feds

The family of a Milwaukee man who was fatally shot by a city police officer say they aren't giving up hope that the officer will be charged.

Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm announced Monday that former officer Christopher Manney, who is white, acted in self-defence when he killed Donte Hamilton, who was black. But later in the day, U.S. Attorney James Santelle announced that the Department of Justice, his office and the FBI will review whether Manney violated federal civil rights laws.

Dontre Hamilton's brother, Nate Hamilton, said the family hopes federal investigators can take a more objective look at the case than Milwaukee authorities. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

290 Syrian cultural sites damaged by civil war



This file photo made on Thursday, May 1, 2014, shows a general view of Crac des Chevaliers, the world's best-preserved medieval Crusader castle, in Syria. DUSAN VRANIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Satellite imagery shows that at least 290 cultural heritage sites in Syria have been damaged by the country's civil war, a UN agency said Tuesday.

Syria is home to archaeological treasures that span thousands of years of written history, from the Roman ruins in the desert oasis of Palmyra to the towering Crusader castle known as the Crac des Chevaliers near the Mediterranean coast. The nation's capital, Damascus, is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world.

It has long been known that Syria's archaeological sites have been looted and its historic buildings damaged since the country's conflict began in March 2011. But the report released Tuesday by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research provides one of the most substantial looks yet at the scope of the problem.

Analyzing 18 different cultural areas using commercially available satellite imagery, UNITAR determined that 24 sites were totally destroyed. Another 104 sites were severely damaged, 85 moderately damaged and 77 possibly damaged, the report said.

The evidence provides "alarming testimony of the ongoing damage that is happening to Syria's vast cultural heritage," UNITAR said. "National and international efforts for the protection of these areas need to be scaled up in order to save as much as possible of this important heritage to human-kind."

UNESCO World Heritage sites in Aleppo, Damascus, Palmyra and the Crac des Chevaliers have all sustained major damage, according to UNITAR.

Sites across the country have been exposed to different threats. In some places, shelling and other military activity are responsible for the destruction, while in other places illegal excavations and civilian construction are to blame. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Experts betting on Boxing Day sales

Black Friday's effects. Despite deals in November, Canadians still expected to seek post-Christmas sales

Boxing Day has traditionally been a bonanza for bargain hunters, but will earlier Black Friday promotions put a dent in post-Christmas sales in Canada?

Ian Lee, assistant professor with the Sprott School of Business at Ottawa's Carleton University, said while the Black Friday phenomenon has extended the holiday shopping season until the week of Boxing Day, it is not generating net new sales.

"As they introduce and extend these sales, people become more cynical … I think consumers understand intuitively the Boxing Day week sales are going to be better deals," he said.

Some retailers are already getting a jump on offering end-of-year bargains. Amazon.ca announced plans to feature new Boxing Day deals daily beginning Tuesday until Dec. 29, while Best Buy will launch its Boxing Day sale online on Christmas Eve.

Adrienne Down Coulson, general manager of cash-back shopping site Ebates.ca, said while participating in Black Friday and Cyber Monday promotions is "much less optional" for Canadian companies today, she doesn't foresee a huge effect on Boxing Day.

"Boxing Day is still one of the biggest shopping days, if not the biggest shopping day, in Canada. So as a retailer, they've got to be aggressive if they're going to compete," she said.

Boxing Day was traditionally driven by retailers seeking to clear out leftover inventories to make way for winter merchandise, noted David Soberman, professor of marketing at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Shopping plans

An online survey commissioned by cash-back shopping site Ebates.ca found that about 40 per cent of Canadians plan to shop on Boxing Day.

- Most shoppers were planning to buy clothing (69 per cent) followed by electronics (63 per cent), said general manager Adrienne Down Coulson.
- When the same question was posed about Black Friday and Cyber Monday in November, the categories were reversed.



Gifts of Christmas past

Collector Dianne Adcock carries out three Cabbage Patch Kids from about 1980 after they received a bath at Babyland General Hospital, the birthplace of Cabbage Patch Kids, in Cleveland, Ga. Thirty years after they sparked a frenzy, Cabbage Patch Kids still have avid fans. Newer hand-stitched dolls start at about $225 US, but dolls dating to before the mass-market frenzy can sell for tens of thousands of dollars. DAVID GOLDMAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Potentially lethal

FDA sounds off on caffeine powder

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is building a legal case against companies that sell pure powdered caffeine after the death of an Ohio teen. Even a teaspoon can be lethal — it is equivalent to 25 cups of coffee. Some teenagers are drawn to the powder for its perceived energy boost.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

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VOICES

TIME TO END CHILD POVERTY

Activist brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger explain that while Canada is a more prosperous country now than ever before, poverty levels have also never been higher

The number of Canadian children who depend on food banks every month could fill 6,200 school buses. And we would need a line of buses stretching almost 300 kilometres long for all the children in this country who live in poverty. Those are staggering figures in a country as wealthy as ours.

Every child on those buses has a different story. There's a boy whose single mother works two jobs, struggling just to pay the bills in East Vancouver. A child of an immigrant family in Toronto's Regent Park, who came here with nothing. A girl on the Attawapiskat First Nations reserve in northern Ontario, living in a tiny house with no heat or clean water, and who only just got a proper school this year.

The rate of child poverty in Canada has increased since 1989 when our federal government voted unanimously to wipe it out by 2000. Twenty-five years later, more than 1.3 million Canadian children live below the poverty line.

The number of Canadians who rely on food banks grows every year. Almost 100 First Nations communities face drinking water advisories, and as many as 48 communities still lack a school. In the north, we've seen three families crammed into a small house, sleeping shoulder to shoulder on the floor. The same is often true of new immigrant families who arrive in our urban centres and share tiny apartments.

Our country has seen extraordinary economic growth, and at the same time deepening inequality.

If we believe every Canadian child deserves the same fair chance to thrive, we need to ask how we give them that.

From Ecuador to India, in our international work we find that fighting child poverty is mostly about meeting families' most basic needs like food, clean water and education. Those challenges exist here. But in Canada, the problem is more complex than simply building a school, or putting food on the table.

In part, it's about empowering people to change their own lives.

Given the opportunity and the tools, young Canadians in low-income communities have an incredible capacity to make positive change — for themselves, their families and their neighbours. We've learned that working with youth in urban neighbourhoods like Toronto's Regent Park, and with aboriginal youth in our Sacred Circle program. When young Canadians in these communities take on a service project — tackling issues like drug abuse or youth suicide — in the process of helping others they help themselves. Still, as Canadians we need to ask ourselves, what kind of country do we want to live in? Do we want a Canada where every child has the opportunity to succeed? If so, it's time to come up with a plan that will fulfil the promise we made 25 years ago to end child poverty.

Brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger founded a platform for social change that includes the international charity Free The Children, the social enterprise Me to We and the youth empowerment movement We Day.

We asked you:

What's the nicest thing a stranger has ever done for you?*

Just in time for Christmas, we asked people from around the country to share their stories of random acts of kindness:



Andrea Juby, Vancouver

While I was looking for a new apartment this fall, my current building manager — who was a stranger to me at the time — offered to hold a beautiful light-filled studio for a whole month until I was ready to move in. She said, "We don't want to bankrupt you before Christmas!" I walked away on air, I was so moved. That immense kindness created a real sense of home for me. I am so grateful to her and I look forward to my opportunity to pay that kindness forward.



Ena Goquiolay, Calgary

When my family and I migrated to Canada in 2001, we didn't know anybody. A newly immigrated Filipino family, who my parents only knew by referral from mutual friends back home, picked us up from the airport and offered us a room in their small apartment until my parents could find a basement to rent. They drove us to government offices and garage sales. Their kids lent us their toys and showed us around the neighbourhood. Fourteen years later, we consider these once strangers part of our family.



Holly Hilfyard, Edmonton

Holly Hilfyard said the nicest thing someone has done for her is direct traffic just to get her out of a highly congested area. "You know when you're trying to get out of a parking lot and there's just so much traffic?" she said.



Renata Tracy, Toronto *

Someone — their name was Aris — once rode their bike from Montreal to Toronto to see me for one day.

Editor's note: Aris was not a stranger to Renata. That probably would have been creepy. There was a misunderstanding in Toronto about which question to ask, but this answer was so nice we thought we'd use it anyway :)



Stephen Freedman, Ottawa

I asked a stranger for help once when my phone died. He was kind enough to let me use my phone to call my mom. She was supposed to pick me up and I was supposed to tell her where. I was downtown. There would have been a lot of confusion if I didn't call.



Qian Giang, Halifax

I crossed Spring Garden and just lost my (wallet) and another person helped me pick up my (wallet) and return to me.

metro

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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES





Amy Adams ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Amy Adams on the outs with Today over Sony scandal

It was just supposed to be a simple morning talk-show appearance for Amy Adams to promote her latest film, Big Eyes, and do a victory lap after her impressive Saturday Night Live hosting duty, but instead we have yet another repercussion of the Sony hacking scandal.

Adams was reportedly in the Today show green room, ready to go on the air, when she was told she would be asked to comment on the Sony scandal. "Amy said she didn't want to contribute to the media coverage of it ... then she was abruptly told that her interview with Today was cancelled. She was shocked and upset," a source tells Page Six.

Another source, though, saw her as a bit more than "shocked and upset," claiming that Adams "was angry and acting belligerent, she was yelling at Today producers and reduced a young female staffer to tears." Guess she did learn a thing or two from working with David O. Russell after all.

Probably the most entertaining part of all of this is the NBC spokesperson's statement explaining that "as a news program, the Today show doesn't allow guests to put restrictions on interviews."

Oh man. First of all, that's total bull. And second of all, it's so cute that you think of yourself as a news program. Adorable.

Berlin fest won't let Fifty Shades wear out welcome

In a move that kind of makes Germany's prestigious Berlinale seem kind of desperate, Fifty Shades of Grey will be celebrating its international premiere at the 65th annual edition of the film festival, programmers announced this week. The press release even goes so far as to call the roles of Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) and Anastasia Steel (Dakota Johnson) "iconic."

Guys, come on. This is soft-core S&M porn originally written as fan fiction for Twilight, an already pretty terrible book series.

The festival also announced they'll be screening the film only once, meaning either they're really trying to build up excitement around it or they're secretly embarrassed about screening it at all. I'm going with the latter.



Jamie Dornan



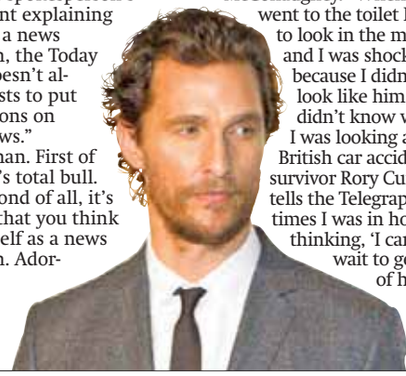
Dakota Johnson

Alright, alright, aw shucks! Man wakes from coma thinking he's McConaughey

You think you know what disappointment feels like? Try being the British man who came out of a six-day coma in 2012 thinking he was Matthew McConaughey. "When I went to the toilet I went to look in the mirror and I was shocked because I didn't look like him, I didn't know what I was looking at," British car accident survivor Rory Curtis tells the Telegraph. "At times I was in hospital thinking, 'I can't wait to get out of here and back to filming movies.' I was convinced I was him and that I had his good looks as well. I know it was hopeful thinking, really." Yeah, but just imagine how bummed he'd be if this had happened after McConaughey's Oscar win.

Also, Curtis says he came out of the coma speaking fluent French, a language that he'd never studied and that, to my knowledge, McConaughey doesn't speak either.

"I was sitting there spouting a foreign language from my hospital bed, acting all French in their sort of arrogant yet sophisticated way," he says. Sounds charming.



Matthew McConaughey

SCENE

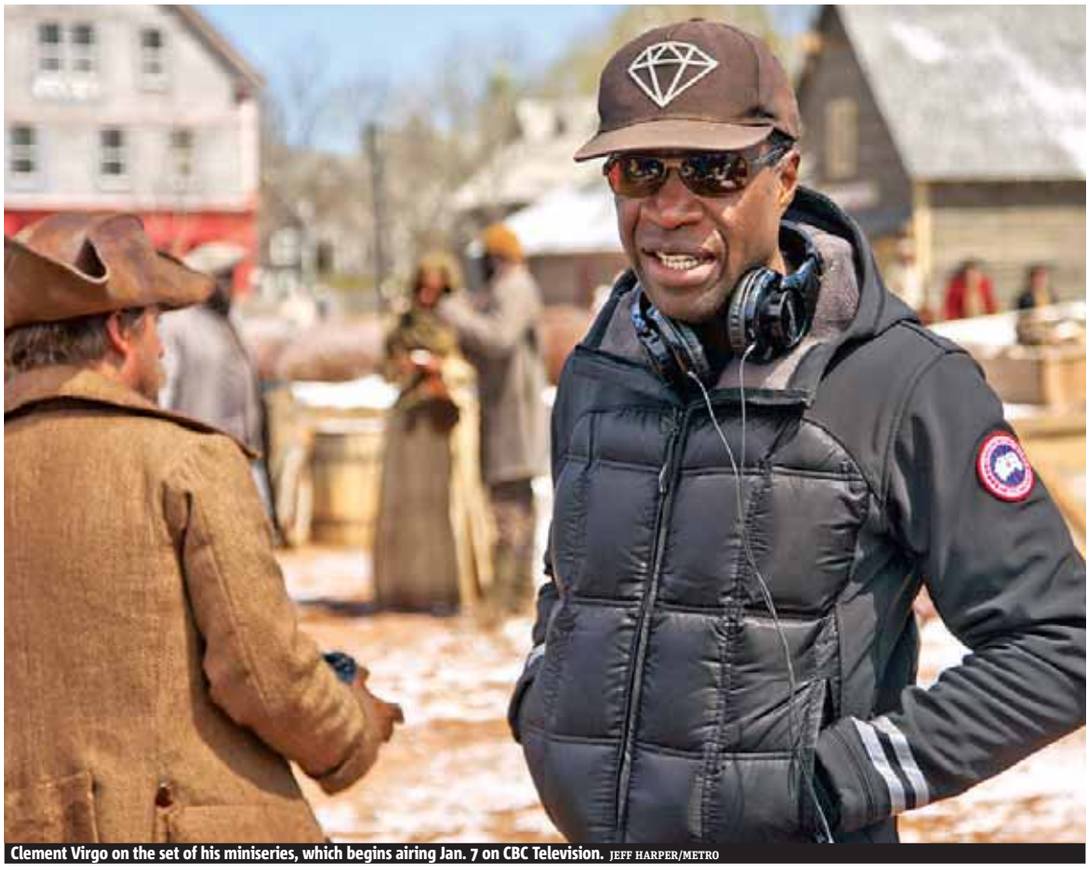
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Virgo hopes fans come 'along for the ride'

Miniseries. Director of N.S.-filmed Book of Negroes talks about search for lead actress, challenge of story spanning decades



HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax



Clement Virgo on the set of his miniseries, which begins airing Jan. 7 on CBC Television. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Clement Virgo wasn't sure he even wanted to read the Book of Negroes.

Virgo, who directed and co-wrote the miniseries of the same name alongside author Lawrence Hill, said it was hard to get past the title before he realized it was referencing a real document that listed the names of black people who helped the British in the Revolutionary War.

"What brought me to the story is the main character, Aminata Diallo," the Canadian director said in an interview from Toronto. "She's a terrific heroine and her voice and her journey really … made me want to spend four years trying to bring her to the screen."

His "No. 1 challenge" was finding someone who had the right acting chops, could embody Aminata's vulnerability and strength while playing both young and old — and he could enjoy spending nearly every scene with, Virgo said.

"Once we found Aunjanue Ellis … I was quite relieved," he said.

Although the book was released as Someone Knows My Name in the United States, where there has been a more "turbulent history" around race, Virgo said the miniseries will air as the Book of Negroes on BET and the title should be a "non-issue" once people know its historical roots.

Although the book was originally supposed to be turned into a feature film, Virgo said some of the most "visually interesting" work right now is on TV, and the book's dense material fits better in a miniseries than crammed into a movie.

Working with Hill in adapting the book was easy because he was "not precious" about his novel and was open to compressing some aspects of the book while keeping it historically accurate, Virgo said.

Virgo said he tried to focus on what he felt was important to the story and making Hill happy, while forgetting about fans of the book "looking over my shoulder."

"I was just trying to be truthful, and emotionally engaged, and hopefully they'll come along for the ride," he said.

The "genius" of Hill's story is how he thrust a Forrest Gump-like character into the history of slavery, the American Revolution, segregated settlements in Nova Scotia, and the journey back to Africa without it seeming like a lecture, Virgo said.

As Canadians watch the series, Virgo said, he hopes they realize no matter where you come from, or who you are, you can overcome anything life throws at you.

"That's what Aminata represents; perseverance and resilience in the face of a lot of hardship," he said.

Quoted

"It's a very factual story that is moving."

Director Clement Virgo on The Book of Negroes

Getting into character

Gossett Jr. on the strong spirit of Daddy Moses

Like his character's biblical namesake, Lou Gossett Jr. leads his people out of hardship and across the ocean to find their homeland by keeping up hope. Gossett, an American actor whose career spans five decades and includes An Officer and a Gentleman and the TV series Roots, plays preacher Daddy Moses in the Book of Negroes miniseries.

"I'm drawn to his spirit," Gossett said with a warm smile on the film set in Shelburne, N.S. "Faith is tested at its most when things are tough. That's how you grow."

Gossett said he didn't know the story before reading the script but has done book adaptations before, and appreciates "the challenge." Although Daddy Moses has a sense of humour and there are many light moments in the miniseries, Gossett said portraying the story of slavery touched him deeply. "My emotions are available, so when it happens, it happens on camera," he said.

HALEY RYAN/ METRO



Lou Gossett Jr. GETTY IMAGES





Joshua Jackson's never had it so Golden

Television. The Affair star is grateful for a cable schedule that gives him time to live his life



NED EHRBAR
Metro in Hollywood

Joshua Jackson's latest show, The Affair, wrapped up its first 10-episode season Sunday night, but despite the series' success and critical acclaim — including three Golden Globe nominations — he understands if you still think of other work he's done when you see him.

"Depending on where you are in the world, Pacey left a mark, and I'm 36 years old now. That's a long time ago," Jackson says of his breakout Dawson's Creek role.

"Frankly even before that, (there was) The Mighty Ducks. Maybe not in the rest of the world, but for Canada, I still walk around as the bearded old man that I am now and have nine-year-olds who are like, 'Charlie! Oh my God, what's going on?'"

It may seem jarring to hear a 36-year-old call himself an old man — and Jackson mentions his age often enough to suggest it's on his mind a lot — but keep in mind his first Mighty Ducks film came out nearly 23 years ago. And Dawson's Creek? Just celebrated its 16th birthday.

"I look back on those years very fondly, and obviously that was a life-changing event for me. I was already a working actor, but now it was a career arc rather than something that I was a doing when I was a kid," he says. "Yes, I do feel old sometimes."

But with age comes wisdom, and for Jackson the 10-episode structure of The Affair — and the cable landscape in general — was a revelation.

"As a man who's done a lot of seasons of television and frankly just been working for a long, long time — I mean, this is my 25th year in the union, I can't believe that's true, but it's true — what is so lovely about doing 10 episodes is that just at the point which you're tired and you want the season to be done, it's done and then you can go out and live the rest of your life," he says.

So what does living the rest of his life look like these days?

"Well, right now I'm building a house. Diane and I are building a house so I am a foreman on a construction site," he says, name-checking longtime girlfriend Diane Kruger.

"The woman is key. Truly, I mean I've been with Diane now for eight-and-a-half years, and the process of being in love and accommodating another human being in your space is important. This is the thing that I've learned that I enjoy most about being in love and having a partner is having somebody who shares your story for better and for worse, right? Somebody who has been there through all the moments: the ups, the downs, the sideways, the boring moments, the exciting moments."



Joshua Jackson stars in The Affair airing on The Movie Network and Movie Central. CONTRIBUTED

Building on a relationship

"This is the thing that I've learned that I enjoy most about being in love and having a partner is having somebody who shares your story for better and for worse, right? Somebody who has been there through all the moments: the ups, the downs, the sideways, the boring moments, the exciting moments." Joshua Jackson



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Repaired relationship working famously well

Television. David Arquette talks friendship with Courteney Cox and Celebrity Name Game

Exes David Arquette and Courteney Cox seem to have hit a sweet spot in their personal and professional relationships.

Working together as parents, actors and business partners with Coquette Productions, which recently launched Celebrity Name Game on GameTV in Canada, Arquette says they've "hit such a stride" where they "just really help each other."

"First and foremost, we are friends and we love each other," says Arquette. "We're incredible co-parents, she's a wonderful mother, we love our daughter and we just want a healthy relationship for that, in general.

"But as far as Coquette goes, we've been developing this production company for over 10 years, so it's something we've invested a lot of time and energy in. It's something we get a lot of joy out of. So to just throw it away is a waste — on top of the fact that we really work together really well."

Through Coquette Productions, they've also developed projects including the series Cougar Town and Dirt and the upcoming film Just Before I Go, which Cox directed. The company also has a development deal at ABC Studios.

"We respect each other. We enhance each other's skill sets," says Arquette, 43. "We seldom ever have any kind of conflict. ... The greatest part is that when we get on a set that's a really fun set, that our daughter is there and she sees her parents interacting and caring for each other and having fun and being productive and creative.

"It's just a good lesson all around."

Airing nightly at 7:30 p.m. ET, Celebrity Name Game is a half-hour series that pairs well-known personalities with contestants in order to identify famous names based on improvised clues. Craig Ferguson hosts the comical show, which unfolds over four rounds and offers contestants the chance to win $20,000.

Celebrity guest stars include Cox, Arquette, Emmanuelle Chriqui, Sheryl Crow, Mario Lopez, Tom Arnold, Lisa Kudrow and Kevin McHale.

"It's hard," says Arquette. "When you get in front of the audience and there's a ticking clock, you'd be surprised at how your brain just goes blank sometimes."

Game shows and board games have been a big part of Arquette's life.

As a child, he didn't live near his grandfather, actor-comedian Cliff Arquette, so he watched him on the game show Hollywood Squares in order to feel connected.

"We lived across the country and I was really young, but it was one of the ways I got to know him," he says "I was only three or four or something and I'd be able to watch him on television, and I loved the show and I loved the humour and I loved the entertainment element.

"So it had always been something we loved, and my father was an improvisational actor, so we did a lot of improv games, like Charades or Freeze."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

History of him and her

- Arquette and Cox announced their split in 2010 and finalized their divorce in May 2013 after nearly 14 years of marriage. They have a 10-year-old daughter named Coco and have appeared onscreen together in projects including the Scream horror films.



From his wrestling days in the early 2000s to his stints as a graffiti artist and a breakdancer, Arquette says he likes "just having fun, going out there and being silly." GETTY

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Ratings: *Certified Fresh:* *Fresh:* *Rotten:* *Audience response:* *Audience anticipation for the film:* +

Mystery & Suspense



The Imitation Game

Director. Morten Tyldum

Stars. Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley

During the winter of 1952, British authorities entered the home of mathematician, cryptanalyst and war hero Alan Turing to investigate a burglary. They ended up arresting Turing on charges of 'gross indecency', that would lead to his conviction of homosexuality — little did officials know they were incriminating the pioneer of computing.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 86% **Audience:** + 98%

Kids/Family



Into the Woods

Director. Sean Anders

Stars. Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, James Corden

Into the Woods is a modern twist on several of the beloved Brothers Grimm fairy tales, intertwining the plots of a few choice stories and exploring the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests. This humorous and heartfelt musical follows the classic tales of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 71% **Audience:** + 97%

Drama



Big Eyes

Director. Tim Burton

Stars. Amy Adams, Christoph Waltz

Directed and produced by Tim Burton, Big Eyes is based on the true story of Walter Keane (Christoph Waltz), who was one of the most successful painters of the 1950s and early 1960s. The artist earned staggering notoriety by revolutionizing the commercialization and accessibility of popular art with his enigmatic paintings of waifs with big eyes.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 72% **Audience:** + 95%

Drama



Unbroken

Director. Angelina Jolie

Stars. Jack O'Connell, Domhnall Gleeson

Academy Award winner Angelina Jolie directs and produces Unbroken, following the incredible life of Olympian and war hero Louis "Louie" Zamperini (Jack O'Connell) who, along with two other crewmen, survived in a raft for 47 days after a near-fatal plane crash in the Second World War, only to be caught by the Japanese Navy and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 48% **Audience:** + 96%

Musical



Annie

Director. Will Gluck

Stars. Jamie Foxx, Quvenzhane Wallis

A Broadway classic that has delighted audiences for generations comes to the big screen with a new, contemporary vision in. This modern telling captures the magic of the classic characters. Annie, a young, happy foster kid who's also tough enough to make her way on the streets of New York in 2014.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 29% **Audience:** 61%

Mystery/Drama



The Gambler

Director. Rupert Wyatt

Stars. Mark Wahlberg

Jim Bennett (Mark Wahlberg) is a risk taker. Both an English professor and a high-stakes gambler, Bennett bets it all when he borrows from a gangster (Michael Kenneth Williams) and offers his own life as collateral. Always one step ahead, Bennett pits his creditor against the operator of a gambling ring (Alvin Ing) and leaves his dysfunctional relationship with his wealthy mother.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 62% **Audience:** + 94%



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How-to

Use travel time wisely

1. Use travel time to relax, not to work. Power down and give your brain a break.
2. Load your iPad with that documentary you've been meaning to watch or that video tutorial you haven't had time to wrap your head around.
3. Review a language app of the foreign country you're heading to (quietly, of course). Even 10 simple words and phrases can go a long way — and two of them had better be "please" and "thank you."
4. Is the flight attendant/tour guide handing out local newspapers? Brush up on the news of the day at your destination, so you'll have something to add to the local chit-chat.
5. Never forget this all-important travel rule, whether you're on a plane, train or bus: Sleep when you can.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

New

Westin facelift at Tremblant



Calling all ski bums: Le Westin Resort & Spa, Tremblant, Que., has recently completed a major reno. All 122 guest rooms have been redone, as has the more than 4,000 square feet of meeting space, the lobby and the front desk, spruced up with a living green wall. Expect natural wood details, earthy colours, warm fabrics and lots of big, big windows. Recharge the batteries, then hit the slopes — and repeat. Visit StarwoodHotels.com.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

Deal

Escape to Portugal



Beat the winter blahs by heading to the Algarve. Gateways International is offering 14 days in Albufeira, Portugal, including hotel and airfare from Toronto, from $1,775 (taxes included) for travel between Jan. 1 and March 31. Because this deal is based on availability, you can get a little more flexibility with dates, and with airfare being the bulk of the cost, you could stay an extra week for peanuts if you wanted to. Call 800-268-0900.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

The hot destinations of 2015

Make a list. Here's a rundown of accessible and fascinating trips to plan next year



The One World Trade observatory is expected to open in late spring 2015. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

See Cuba before it changes. Check out the World Expo in Milan. And if you're heading to New York City to see the view from One World Trade Center's observatory (scheduled to open late spring), take the subway to Queens and see if you can figure out why it topped Lonely Planet's "best in the U.S." destinations for 2015.

Europe

The Milan Expo opens in May for six months and is expected to draw 20 million visitors. The Expo is the modern incarnation of the old World's Fairs that thrilled 19th- and 20th-century guests with new products and technology.

The theme of the Milan Expo is food and nutrition, and dozens of countries are participating. The U.S. will do its part by sending six authentic food trucks to Italy featuring regional American and ethnic fusion menus. Milan's famous opera house, La Scala, normally closed in the summer, will host performances daily during the Expo.

Anniversaries

Singapore celebrates its golden Jubilee — 50 years of independence from Great Britain. Vietnam celebrates 70 years since achieving independence from France, and 50 years since the first U.S. combat troops arrived at Da Nang, which some historians say marked the start of the Vietnam War — even though Americans had been sent to the country in prior years.

A number of U.S. museums and historic sites will be hosting exhibits and events to mark 150 years since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the end of the Civil War.

The new year also marks 70 years since the end of Second World War — both the defeat of Nazi Germany and the atomic bombing of Japan that ended the war in Asia. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are planning memorial services on the August anniversaries of the bombings, along with numerous arts projects and peace-themed events throughout the year.

In New Orleans, Aug. 29 will be the 10-year anniversary of the devastation of hurricane Katrina. "Come see the new New Orleans" is the tourist industry mantra for showcasing trendy emerging neighbourhoods and a vibrant restaurant scene.

South Dakota expects crowds for the 50th Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup in September and the 75th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in August.



Head over to South Dakota for the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup in September. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cuba

The news that the U.S. intends to normalize relations with Cuba could lead to a rush of travellers hoping to experience the island before it loses its frozen-in-time culture to an onslaught of U.S. chain stores, hotels and tourists. But don't pack your bags just yet: For the near future, the only way you can legally visit Cuba as an American citizen is to take a "people to people" cultural exchange tour licensed by the U.S. government. The tours are expensive and itineraries are limited.

Theme Parks

Universal Studios Hollywood debuts two new attractions in 2015: Springfield, an immersive area opening in spring surrounding The Simpsons Ride, and Fast & Furious — Supercharged, a thrill ride opening in summer based on the film series.

Disneyland opens Frozen Fun in January in Anaheim, Calif., with a singalong, Olaf's Snow Fest, and meet-and-greets with Anna and Elsa, among other attractions. The California theme park also celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, with celebration details to be revealed at the end of January.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York City

Two big openings take place in the Big Apple in 2015: the observatory at One World Trade in late spring and the new Whitney Museum of American Art in May in Manhattan's Meatpacking District near the High Line and the Hudson River. The city also got a Christmas gift from Lonely Planet, which named the borough of Queens as a "best in the U.S." destination. Manhattan has been giving ground to trendy Brooklyn in recent years, but the elevation of Queens as the next big thing was a bit of a surprise. Not that New Yorkers and tourists alike don't love Queens attractions like the 1964 World's Fair grounds, the hipster beach scene in the Rockaways, Chinatown in Flushing, the Asian and Latin American ethnic mix in Jackson Heights and the emerging industrial-chic ambience of Long Island City. But the borough is not quite on tourist radars yet — though the Lonely Planet pronouncement may change that.

How to stop being afraid of the followup

Career. They've said they'd be in touch, but should you give them a shout in the meantime?

LAUREN MARINIGH
TalentEgg.ca

Knowing how to follow up after an interview can be key to determining if you progress on to the next step in the hiring process.

If you're not the most assertive person, you may be afraid to reach out post-interview. Here are some important steps to follow that can help make the process less intimidating.

Organize details

Often job descriptions will outline how or if they would like you to follow up.

Some jobs will state that only qualified applicants will be contacted, and will strictly outline not to follow up. Make sure you make note of these things as you are sending out applications.

Once you have sent out a followup, make sure to make note of a response you receive. This will be crucial in knowing when to follow up again, or knowing the job status.

There is nothing worse than following up when you've already heard that a position is closed.

Follow up with the appropriate person

Just as when you apply for a job, it's important that your followup be directed to the right person.

If you applied to a general HR email, you can try following up to that email, but chances are you won't hear back.

Try to find the person in charge of hiring for that particular position.

If you apply via LinkedIn, often you will be able to see who posted the job, and that will help identify the right person with whom to follow up.

Know the platform

How should you be following up?

If a position specifically states "No phone calls," follow up with an email.

Email is generally a safer and less invasive bet anyway, as it allows for the hiring manager to reply back in their own time — and avoids creating an awkward situation.

You don't want to catch someone off-guard or annoy them by not following instructions that were clearly laid out in the first place.

If you have a more casual relationship with someone involved in the hiring process (but not the key decision-maker), you may want to consider using a social media platform (like Twitter) to touch base.

Let it be and give it time

There is a fine line between following up and annoying human resources by being too persistent.

You'll definitely be contacted if you are a promising candidate, so imagine your followup as simply a confirmation of interest and an opportunity to (hopefully) gain more information about your application status in the process.

If you don't hear back from the hiring manager, don't take it personally.

While you may be disappointed that your carefully-crafted application didn't get a response, letting go of your disappointment is the only way to move forward.

Send the right message

Not knowing what to share in a followup message is a common reason for opting out.

- Don't overthink it. If you're following up on an application, keep your message brief and inquire politely about the opportunity you've applied to. Reiterate your interest and ask if there have been any new developments in the hiring process.
- If you're following up on an interview, it's OK to go into more detail. Make sure to share that you appreciated the opportunity to connect, and bring up a few key discussion topics. Close by adding that you look forward to hearing about the hiring process soon.



Refreshing your inbox repeatedly is only going to result in frustration. If the position is taken down and you still haven't heard back after a few weeks, it's safe to say they are not interested. ISTOCK

It's beginning to look a lot like the work blahs



OFFICE SPACE
Eleni Deacon
life@metronews.ca



It's hard to stay happy when the weather is at its worst, but there are ways to curb your curmudgeonliness. ISTOCK

Dear Metro,

I get extremely sluggish in the winter. It's so hard to get up in the morning—and even once I'm awake, I still feel like I'm asleep. Everything is just so blah. How can I stay focused at work when all I want to do is crawl under a blanket?

— Want 2 Hibernate

Dear W2H,

If only we could eat a bunch of acorns, then curl up in a cute little ball and nap until April. But humans aren't chipmunks. Even in 20-below weather, we've got to haul our tails to work.

Although you want to park yourself under an afghan, don't. Physical activity — even a little bit each day — can radically energize your system. To stay positive at work, set a few manageable professional resolutions that will boost your performance without stirring up oh-no-I'm-flunking-my-resolutions anxiety. And give yourself something fun to look forward to on a daily basis. It could be something big, like a vacation. Or something small, like fancy crackers in your lunch. Winter slowdown is normal, but if your blahs run really blue, consider seeking treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Health-care professionals can advise on ways to make the dreary months less dark, both at work and in your off-hours.

The weather outside may be frightful, but the next few months don't have to be totally awful.

Dear Metro,

My boss recently lost it on a colleague for mixing up the numbers in a report. Thing is, my colleague had the wrong numbers because of a silly mistake with my calculations. I know I should confess, but I started this job recently and I don't want to get off on the wrong foot. How can I absolve my co-worker without hurting my own career?

— Playing Scruples

Dear PS,

Your biggest mistake is not owning up to your mistake. While small slip-ups don't necessarily need admitting, hiding larger missteps could easily make them worse. In this case, size doesn't matter: someone else shouldn't have to take the blame for your blunder.

Find a way to frame your story so you don't come off like the no-shame new guy who stood idle while Peter got screamed at in his stead.

A small but self-serving white lie — "I just noticed an error in my calculations" — could exonerate your colleague while downplaying your cowardice.

Confessing won't be easy, but facing your faults is a sign of professional maturity.

Clear the air and your conscience, then move forward.

Your boss may irritated that you made an anger-worthy gaffe in your first stint on the job. But it would be even worse if he found out you were a liar.

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Bacon the icing on baked apple pancake

Christmas brunch.
Bacon-apple upside-down pancake delivers a crowd-pleasing salty caramelized crunch



This recipe serves 4. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Like Thanksgiving, Christmas is one of those holidays that requires aroma.

On Thanksgiving, we need the house to smell of turkey and stuffing and sweet potatoes. On Christmas, we need whiffs of indulgent breakfast items, like cinnamon rolls or a bubbling fruit crisp. Or maybe you prefer hash browns and bacon. Those get the job done nicely, too.

This year combine sweet and savoury with this baked pancake inspired by an upside-down cake. For ease, it can partially prepped the night before. To do that, just make the batter as directed in a blender, then refrigerate it overnight in the blender carafe. In the morning, just give it a quick whir to freshen it, then you're ready to assemble the pancake.

And that's when things get good. You start by frying bacon in a skillet. Once the bacon is crisp, you top it with a layer of thinly sliced apples. Give those a couple minutes to soften, then you add a hefty sprinkle of brown sugar and cinnamon. Finally, you pour on the batter and pop the whole thing in the oven to finish.

When it's done, you overturn the pancake onto a serving platter and cut it into wedges. You may not need to, but there's no harm in dousing the whole thing with maple syrup.

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- Kosher salt
- 1 large apple
- 8 strips bacon
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Heat the oven to 375 F.

2. In a blender, combine the milk, egg, oil and vanilla. Blender until smooth.

3. With the blender running on low, sprinkle in the flour, sugar, baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Stop blending as soon as the mixture is smooth. Set aside.

4. Use an apple corer or melon baller to core the apple, but leave the fruit intact. Set the apple on its side, then cut it into thin round slices. Set aside.

5. Heat a large oven-safe skillet over medium. Add the bacon and cook for 6 to 7 minutes on one side. Spoon out and discard about half of the fat in the pan, then turn the bacon strips to cook on the other side, laying them flat and evenly over the bottom of the pan.

6. Top the bacon with the apple slices, arranging them evenly. Cover the pan and cook for 2 minutes.

7. Mix together the brown sugar, cinnamon and a pinch of salt, then sprinkle the mixture over the apples.

8. Carefully and evenly pour the pancake batter over the apples and bacon. Place the skillet in the oven and bake until lightly browned and cooked through, about 20 minutes.

9. Let the pancake cool for 5 minutes. Use a paring knife to loosen the edges of the pancake, then overturn a large serving plate over the skillet. Invert the skillet to release the pancake onto the plate. Cut into wedges.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sweet Potato and Salmon Hash Bake serves 8. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nestle salmon and eggs in sweet potato hash

Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled
- 4 medium Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 cup diced roasted red peppers
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped capers
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 8 ounces smoked salmon
- Sour cream or 8 poached eggs (optional)
- Lemon zest, to serve
- Chopped fresh chives, to serve
- Caviar (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Coat a 3- to 4-quart casserole dish with cooking spray.

2. In a large skillet over medium-high, melt the butter. Add the onion and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, or until tender and starting to brown.

3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, grate the sweet potatoes and Yukon gold potatoes. Alternatively, use the medium grating disc on a food processor to shred the potatoes. Either way, grasp the shredded potatoes a handful at a time to squeeze and discard as much liquid as possible, returning the potatoes to the bowl.

4. To the potatoes, add the onion-butter mixture, roasted red pepper, capers, thyme and a 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and black pepper. Spoon the mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Bake for 50 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the top is golden brown.

5. Top the hash with slices of smoked salmon and either dollops of sour cream or poached eggs, if using. Grate fresh lemon zest over the top, then sprinkle with black pepper and chopped chives. Top with caviar, if desired.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Home Matters

Time to tackle that project in your house that has been bugging you for too long and you're not sure where to go for help? Looking for skilled professionals to help with home maintenance or renovation projects? Look no further! Below are qualified outlets available to help you out.

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The Coyotes' Kyle Chipchura sends the Oilers' Justin Schultz airborne during the second period of Tuesday evening's game at Rexall Place. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

No Christmas cheers for bumbling Oilers

NHL. Ex-teammate has four point night as Edmonton's hockey club enters holidays on familiar losing note

On Tuesday

Coyotes	Oilers
5	1

Former Oiler Sam Gagner had two goals and two assists as the Arizona Coyotes snapped a two-game losing skid, coming away with a 5-1 victory in Edmonton on Tuesday.

Martin Erat, Keith Yandle and Brandon Gormley also scored for the Coyotes (12-18-4), who won for just the third time in their last 13 games — all three of those victories coming against Edmonton.

Justin Schultz replied for the Oilers (7-21-7), who have now lost eight in a row and 19 of their past 20 games.

The Oilers still only have one win against Western Conference opponents as well, sitting at a troubling 1-17-6 in that category.

Arizona took a 1-0 lead 1:44 into the first period on the game's first shot. Gagner took a hopeful bad-angle shot on net that somehow got past Edmonton starting goalie Ben Scrivens for his fourth goal of the season.

The Coyotes scored on their third shot of the game as well as Erat tipped in Connor Murphy's point shot five minutes in. THE CANADIAN PRESS

World juniors

Canada exposes holes in Swiss game

Max Domi scored a hat trick to lead Canada to a 6-0 victory over Switzerland on Tuesday in the final pre-tournament game before the start of the junior world championship.

Domi scored twice in 13 seconds in the second period before completing his hat trick midway through the third. Brayden Point, Jake Virtanen and Nick Ritchie also scored for Canada, which went 2-0-1 in its three exhibition matches.

Goalie Zach Fucale made 14 saves for the shutout.

The 11-day world junior event, which takes place in Toronto and Montreal, opens on Boxing Day.

Canada outscored its opponents 12-4 through three pre-tournament tune-up games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the hot seat



"I don't look at myself as a three-win coach. I know I'm better than that, yet this is where we're at right now."

New York Jets head coach Rex Ryan still carries confidence despite a poor season.

MLB salaries

$3.8M

The Major League Baseball Players Association said Tuesday the average salary was $3,818,923, up from $3,386,212 last year. The 12.78 per cent hike was the biggest since a 12.83 per cent rise from 2000 to 2001. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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DRIVE

2015 Mazda MX-5

- **Type.** Two-door, rear-wheel-drive compact sports car
- **Engine.** 2.0-litre inline four cylinder (167 hp)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed manual or automatic
- **Price.** $29,450 base (GX), $42,720 as-tested (anniversary edition)

Market position

Debuted in 1989 and continues to stick to original script of providing the most fun-to-drive roadster for the money. The Miata/MX-5 is the best-selling two-seat sports car in history and now has no direct competitors. It is a spiritual successor to traditional low-cost British roadsters, such as the MGB and TR6.

Points

- 2015 Anniversary Edition the last iteration of current generation. An all-new MX-5 is due out next year.
- The U.S. and Canada each received only 100 copies of the Anniversary Edition, which sold out quickly.
- The only exterior colour combination is Soul Red Mica/Brilliant Black — the latter for the retractable hardtop.



The cabin is tight but cosy, with miniature controls and little space.

Safety features

Stability and traction control, four-wheel disc brakes with anti-lock and electronic brake force distribution, limited slip differential, anti-theft alarm, engine immobilizer theft deterrent, front and side airbags, seat-belt pretensioners with force limiter, side impact door beams, fog lights, Xenon headlights.

Just don't mess with success

Review. With a new MX-5 on the horizon, let's hope Mazda sticks with its Miata formula for fun and affordability

MIKE GOETZ
drive@metronews.ca

PHOTOS: MIKE GOETZ



Nobody rocks the concept of a fun and affordable two-seat roadster quite like Mazda. Then again, nobody else really tries anymore.

And who could blame them? Why invest in a separate platform, which is hard to share with other vehicles, for a shrinking pool of buyers?

These cars don't exude the prestige they used to in North America and Europe, as crossovers continue their unrelenting path to complete vehicle domination. And there isn't much demand for them in China and other emerging markets, perhaps defeated by concerns about the weather, traffic and pollution, and a preference among the rich to be chauffeured rather than drive themselves around.

All of which makes the MX-5 even more precious to those of us who still enjoy driving. From its inception in 1990, the Miata was conceived as a car to provide the most driving joy per dollar, by keeping engine size and power in check, and concentrating on lightness, balance, driver feedback and simplicity.

And although the car was renamed the MX-5 in 2006, Mazda hasn't strayed from the script since, including the all-new 2016 MX-5, which is waiting in the wings.

Compared to most everything else on the road, the Miata/MX-5 is a small and precise gem. And the 25th-anniversary edition is even more gem-like, with some elegant cosmetic touches, and a knock-out Soul Red Micra paint job.

With just 100 anniversary editions available in Canada, they sold out months ago, but you can still buy the equally impressive 2014 GT model.

The MX-5 offers very light and agile handling. The 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine likes to rev, but takes premium fuel. Its 167 horsepower are not overwhelming, but everything feels faster when you're this low and connected to the pavement. And the manual gearbox is one of the most satisfying to use in autodom.

The ride is not as stiff as you might expect, because it doesn't need a stiff suspension for handling, but it is a bit noisy on the highway.

The cabin is tight, but cosy, with miniature controls and little storage space. Your legs go straight out, with no bend to the knee.

Net result: The MX-5 is one very fine, two-seat, convertible sports car.

Compare



1 BMW Z4
Base price: $56,395
Good looking and powerful, but not visceral.



2 Porsche Boxster
Base price: $59,685
Good looking and powerful, and very visceral.



3 Nissan 370Z Roadster
Base price: $51,238
Excellent bits don't seem to add up to an engaging experience.

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There's nothing cuckoo about coconut coir

Driving Force. Fibres found between the shell and the nut is used for many things, including soaking up oil spills

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

By their very nature, cars and trucks present numerous environmental issues, and not just because of what comes out of their tailpipes.

When something goes wrong and fluids leak out of a vehicle, mechanics and emergency responders usually sop up the mess with several different types of absorbent products that can have environmental issues of their own.

"The most common products are made from clay or diatomaceous earth," says Toby Wilson, president of Coco Products, which makes a more environment-friendly product called Coco Absorb from coconut fibre.



Coco Absorb is an environmentally friendly way to clean up fluid spills from vehicles. JIL MCINTOSH

"Clay products are mined out of the ground, and they're not renewable. Plus, clay can catch fire when it comes into contact with vegetable oil and will spontaneously combust. We're seeing a lot more of that with biodiesel.

"And if perlite (a type of soft volcanic glass) comes in contact with hydrochloric acid, it will create deadly fumes," he adds. "Our product is not reactive to anything out there."

Coco Absorb is made from coconut pith, also known as coir, which is found between the coconut's hard green outer shell and the familiar dark-brown nut inside. Although it was originally just thrown away, coconut coir is now used in many different ways, including in gardening as a soil amendment or pressed into seedling pots, woven into rope, as insulation and, in some countries, burned as fuel.

It's also used in upholstery. Some auto manufacturers use coir in their seats, and they're experimenting with it as a possible ingredient in lightweight plastics and other materials.

The coir's honeycomb-like structure consists of narrow, hollow cells, which absorb fluids.

Unlike most absorbents, which mainly draw fluids into their outermost layers, the coconut pith uses capillary action to act like a sponge and draw liquids inside. It also holds them there, even as it dries, so it doesn't leach potentially toxic fluids after disposal.

One of coir's best features is that, due to a naturally occurring chemical compound called phenol, it bonds with oil first, and can absorb several times its weight. Once it's completely saturated with oil, it won't absorb water.

Although research is still ongoing, coconut coir could therefore be used to contain and absorb oil spills with minimal environmental damage, sopping up the oil while leaving the clean water behind. Even when left there, the oil-soaked coir won't release any of it back into the water.

Coconut coir is also much lighter in weight than clay absorbents, which makes it easier to transport, store, and use.

Core facts on coir

- Coconut trees don't require chemical fertilizers to grow. Each tree produces as many as 200 coconuts per year, making its fibre a renewable resource.
- Coconut coir can also be mixed with leftover waste paint so that it hardens into a solid that won't leach paint into the environment.
- Coconut-based absorbent is used at Walt Disney World, where it's most commonly used to soak up vomit.

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Classics. U.S.-Cuba economic thaw could spell the end for island's iconic cars

Cuba's iconic stock of refurbished vintage American sedans from the 1950s may be facing their last trips to the garage soon, following the historic thawing between Havana and Washington.

Flashy Pontiacs, Plymouths, Dodges and Chevrolets, as well as crudely patched and rickety classics, make up the Communist island's 70,000 "almendrones," cars affectionately called large almonds for their rounded shape.

Fancier classic models are rented for special occasions, while their more rundown counterparts are driven as taxis and by families.

But they all have one thing in common: They survived the Cuban Revolution, the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The almendrones owe their lasting nature to the master skills of local mechanics, as well as to the American embargo and Cuban authorities who put the brakes on replenishing the island's stock of cars.

Read all about them

British architect Norman Foster, struck by the cars' looks and upkeep during a trip to Cuba, paid tribute in the book Havana: Autos and Architecture, where he describes a tight relationship between the island's history and its vehicles.

Purchasing and selling the vehicles, which has only been allowed for three years, is only permitted for Cubans.

The easing of the five-decade U.S. trade embargo is likely to awaken the attention of car connoisseurs worldwide, who are eager to snatch up the classic models.

"You would have to pay me good money to sell my car," said Aramis Carmona, 40, watching tourists from his white and red 1953 Chevy with hubcaps and a chrome bumper. "It puts food on the table," the amateur mechanic said. "When I have a little money, I buy motor oil instead of cooking oil, because I know that that will help me feed my family."

He said he had given new life to the "wreck" he bought 10 years ago for $7,000.

For many years, Cuba decided to swap its Western cars for revolutionary vehicles, like the Russian GAZ-69 jeep adopted by Fidel Castro.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Peugeot 404s made in Argentina, then Czech Skodas and Soviet Ladas tried to take over the road, but with limited success, as the vintage American models kept passing from hand to hand.

Peugeots and Chinese models appeared in the 1990s and 2000s, but they, too, never overpowered the omnipresent American classics.

Few original parts remain under the hoods, as owners have brought them back from the dead multiple times.

Carmona replaced his Chevy's original motor four years ago with a BMW diesel model that consumes far less fuel. The original went only six kilometres per litre. AFP







Although other auto makers have come and gone, classic American cars from the 1950s still flourish on the streets of Cuba. AFP



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Value-priced luxury, with some glitches

Second gear.
2011 to 2014
Chrysler 300

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
drive@metronews.ca

The second generation of Chrysler's popular 300 sedan entered its second generation for 2011, packing new styling, features and equipment into the blend of value-priced luxury that defined the original.

All models were four-door, five-seat units, with numerous features, packages and options. Look for goodies like adaptive xenon lights with automatic high-beams, climate-controlled seats, full multimedia and connectivity, heated and chilled cupholders, a heated steering wheel, a rear window shade and a dual-pane panoramic sunroof.

Common Issues

Start your test drive of a used 300 with an eye for electrical issues, as some owners have reported battery and alternator problems, which can result in a car that won't start, or sketchy or non-operation of certain systems. A healthy electrical and charging system is key to minimizing frustrations like these.

Outside, check for moisture and condensation buildup in the headlights, taillamps and mirror-mounted turn signals.

Have a technician scan for any stored trouble codes in the car's computer. This can reveal hidden issues, including a big one in the 300. Early versions of the Pentastar V6 in 2011 may suffer from a cracked cylinder head, which can cause a misfire. This issue was almost immediately corrected and likely affects a small fraction of that year's 300s.

Some owners have reported strange noises from the rear differential that seem inconsequential, although using revised fluid viscosity in the differential may help. Listen for any abnormal sounds from beneath the back of the 300 on your test drive.





CONTRIBUTED

What owners like

Most owners give high marks to the ride, comfort levels, interior quality and feel, and overall spaciousness of the cabin and trunk. A refined powertrain and great bang for the buck round out the package. Performance and sound effects are also highly rated with the HEMI V8 engine under the hood.

What owners dislike

Common complaints include limited rear-seat headroom for taller passengers, doors that open so widely they're hard to close from the seat, and a sometimes-fussy Bluetooth system. Rearward visibility is fairly poor, thanks to the thin windows.

Engines

The award-winning 3.6-litre Pentastar V6 and 5.7-litre Hemi V8 deliver 292 or 300 horsepower with the V6, and upwards of 360 with the Hemi. All-wheel drive could be teamed with either engine.

The verdict

This generation of Chrysler 300 looks to be fairly solid, with the most commonly reported issues being easy to spot. With a thumbs-up from a technician after an electrical systems check and computer scan, a healthy used model with remaining warranty should prove a confident and affordable way to access a taste of the motoring high life.

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Someone will turn to you and you won't let them down. You like few things better than charging to the rescue, especially when backing the underdog against a bully.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
A colleague will make you an offer you find hard to refuse today, but can you trust them? Find out if it is genuine and, if it is, let them know quickly you want in on the game.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
There will be some remarkable developments in the final days of the year but conserve your energy. The less you do now the more you will gain later on.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Someone will try to pressure you into justifying what you are doing. Do what feels right to you and, if others don't like it, that's just too bad.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Try to build bridges to people you don't always get along with. Just because you have different outlooks does not mean you cannot be friends.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't worry if you have fallen out with a loved one. A few days from now you will be the best of friends again, so don't take it personally if they don't seem to care. They do really.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Make time for family members and make sure they know how much you love them. It won't hurt to be a bit more emotionally expressive.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
According to your solar chart this is a good day for doing nothing much, so sit back, relax and let life come to you.

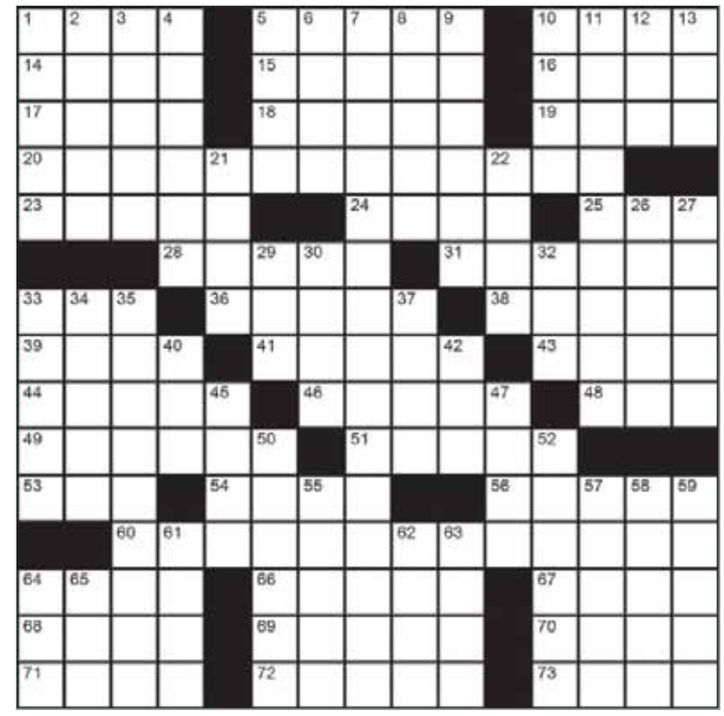
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Deep down you are a big softie and what happens today will prove it. Someone who needs a helping hand will have much to thank you for. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
For best results you should try to be on the move today. If you stay in the same place you could miss out on something special. Get moving and see where fate takes you.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Make the most of Mars in your sign to try something new and maybe take a few risks. You have always been the adventurous sort and now you are determined to show you have absolutely no fear.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Yake life at a sensible pace, especially if you are hosting friends and family over the holiday period. Don't try to do everything yourself.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Herd baby
5. Pointer
10. Hurt
14. Spoken
15. "Silver Bells" bit: "Children laughing / People passing / Meeting __ after..."
16. Christmastime 'pet'
17. Ms. Suvari
18. Reindeers' sniffers
19. "God __ Ye Merry, Gentlemen"
20. "On the seventh day of Christmas / My true love gave to me / Seven __ __ __..." - Bob & Doug McKenzie, "12 Days of Christmas"
23. "Silent Night": "__ in heavenly peace."
24. "Let It Snow": "But the __ is so delightful."
25. Mr. Capote, shortly
28. Christmas star
31. Court game
33. Got [abbr.]
36. Rudolph's straps
38. Terre-__ (Newfoundland)
39. "__! The Herald Angels Sing"
41. Principle
43. 'Game' suffix
44. Cookies left for #28-Across, perhaps
46. Tint-to-hair appliers
48. Jr.s' fathers
49. Reindeer crew member
51. Threshold
53. Ands: French
54. Bellow!
56. Fragrance
60. Gift disguiser: 2 wds.
64. "__ in a Manger"
66. Bird of Jove
67. Roman emperor
68. Ms. Gilbert
69. Mythological blood
70. Mr. Kringle
71. Religious song
72. __ __. (Food packaging meas.)
73. Fully satisfy

Down
1. Free passes, briefly
2. "It's been _ __ pleasure."
3. Mr. Bass
4. Snowy droplets
5. __ __ other (Without equals)
6. "__ __ two minds..."
7. "Jingle Bells": "A day or two ago / I thought I'd take a ride / And soon __ __ __ / Was seated by my side."
8. Fragrant resin
9. Skiing locale
10. Churchyard = God's __
11. They're roasting in the famous Christmas carol
12. G'days
13. Dine
21. Box
22. Eager
26. Christmastime tune by Joni Mitchell
27. Device operators
29. Mesh
30. Linked
32. Belonging to Omaha's li'l state
33. Providence, __ Island
34. Jeweller's unit, variantly
35. Wear a toque, scarf, parka and gloves: 2 wds.
37. Visionary
40. __-i-Noor Diamond
42. Prefix with 'cycle'
45. Evening, in Italy
47. Period of cold weather
50. Corral: 2 wds.
52. "Christmas with the __" (2004)
55. Speedily
57. Classical show
58. Virtue
59. Came about
61. Mr. Gosling
62. Sugar substitute, Sweet'_ __
63. Actor Mr. Frobe
64. Fireplace stuff
65. Method

Yesterday's Crossword

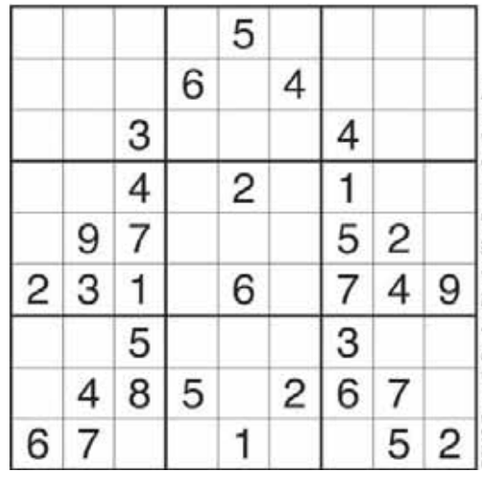


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

1	2	6	4	3	9	5	7	8
7	9	3	2	5	8	6	4	1
4	8	5	1	7	6	2	3	9
3	7	4	6	9	5	1	8	2
9	1	2	3	8	4	7	5	6
6	5	8	7	1	2	4	9	3
2	6	9	8	4	7	3	1	5
5	3	7	9	6	1	8	2	4
8	4	1	5	2	3	9	6	7









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